racism and rape

**HOW ARE THEY CONNECTED?**

**BOTH USE WORDS AS WEAPONS**

Rape and racism are grounded in language with a common purpose . to degrade, dehumanize, and

make violence more acceptable. From the time of slavery to the present day, white people have used

words . .nigger,. .coon,. .spook,. .spade. . to put down black people and undercut their value as

human beings. Men, similarly, employ language . .bitch,. .whore,. .freak,. .baby,. .honey,. .dog.

. which sends the same demeaning messages to women. Ultimately, hearing these words negatively

shapes our view of the people to whom they refer. When we view others as less than fully human, it

becomes easier to hurt and even destroy them. We must recognize the power of our words.

**BOTH OPPRESS WITH THEIR POWER**

Rape and racism are forms of domination. Rape, through coercion, violation, and violence, forces

women and some men to feel intimidated, frightened, and helpless. It makes them think twice about

going to the corner store at night and can make them hesitate to trust a friend or lover. Racism narrows

people.s world and limits their freedom. It makes a black man avoid browsing in a store for fear of

being seen as a thief, or dread that a traffic stop will result in a beating. Racism makes .us. see a

Latino in a white neighborhood as a maid or a gardener. We must open our eyes to the constraining

impact of oppression.

**BOTH FORM THE FABRIC OF OUR NATION**

The United States was built upon racist and sexually violent practices. One need look no further than

the founding of our nation as an illustration of both . a time when Africans were enslaved and forced

from their homelands by the millions, when Native Americans were driven west and massacred, and

when black women were routinely sexually assaulted by white slave owners. People of color played a

vital role in the birth of our country and were rewarded with violation and humiliation. We must know

our history.

**BOTH PROMOTE MYTH, NOT FACT**

Our attitudes about race and rape are built upon myth and misinformation. Destructive and inaccurate

racial and cultural stereotypes are all too common . .Latinos are short-tempered,. .Asian women are

passive,. .black men are rapists,. .Jews are stingy,. .black women are insatiable.. Similarly, so are

myths about sexual violence and its survivors . .rape is just rough sex;. .only women are raped;. .if

her skirt wasn.t so short, she wouldn.t have been raped.. Sometimes, the myths intertwine . .most

rapes involve a black man violating a white woman. . reinforcing distorted images of both race and

rape. If we are to stop racism and rape, we must speak the truth about them.

**BOTH FEED ON OUR SILENCE**

Every time we hear a racist joke and say nothing, every time we listen to someone blame a victim of rape and do

nothing, and every time we pretend that racism and rape are not our problems, we support the continuation of

oppression. We must speak up and speak out. It is not easy, but it is essential. Racism and sexism do not have to

be passed from generation to generation. Our voices can make the world safer for us all.

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